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UNCLAS HO CHI MINH CITY 001000

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/BCLTV, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UNITED BUDDHIST CHURCH OF VIETNAM: GENERAL SECRETARY
CONFIRMS ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION

REF: A) HCMC 0942 B) HCMC 0993 C) HCMC 0978

1. (SBU) Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) General Secretary Thich Tue Sy told ConGen today that he has been placed

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under a two-year administrative detention, effective October 11. He confirmed that Thich Nguyen Ly and Thich Thanh Huyen -- two other UBCV monks riding in the van with the three top-ranking UBCV leaders when they were returning to HCMC on October 8, after an "illegal" UBCV meeting in Binh Dinh Province (ref A) -- had been placed under similar restrictions. The administrative order was signed by Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee Vice Chairman Nguyen Thanh Tai, who holds the portfolio for social welfare, religion, culture, and education. Thich Tue Sy said he did not understand the exact conditions of his detention or whether he would be permitted to leave the Gia Lam Pagoda grounds.

2. (SBU) Updating ConGen from his conversations with other monks today over what he presumed to be monitored lines, Thich Tue Sy said that security officials had prevented several UBCV monks from entering Thanh Minh Zen pagoda to ascertain the welfare and whereabouts of UBCV Deputy Thich Quang Do (ref B). He confirmed that Patriarch Thich Huyen Quang was back at Nguyen Thieu Pagoda in Binh Dinh Province. He said security officials were preventing people from entering or leaving the pagoda -- while the monks were refusing to allow the police inside the grounds. The authorities have apparently spared Thich Vien Dinh (on whose behalf the ConGen and Embassy have received inquiries from individuals who claim to be family members in the U.S.) formal administrative detention, but have told him orally that he must request permission to leave his pagoda.

3. (SBU) Thich Tue Sy recounted how the van containing the UBCV leadership had been stopped in Khanh Hoa Province on the morning of October 9, before he was transported to Go Vap District police station in HCMC later that evening (ref C). On the afternoon of October 11, after nearly two days of questioning, he said that he and Thich Thanh Huyen (also in the van on the trip from Binh Dinh Province) were brought to a school near Gia Lam Pagoda to meet with approximately 20 district officials, including the chairmen of the People's Committee, the Committee for Religious Affairs, and the Fatherland Front, respectively. The district People's Committee Chairman read the administrative detention order, which accused the two monks of organizing a UBCV assembly in the U.S. in 1999, corresponding with EU ambassadors in Hanoi regarding the UBCV, meeting with EU ambassadors while in Hanoi to visit Thich Huyen Quang in April 2003, and organizing the "illegal" meeting at Nguyen Thieu Pagoda this past September (para. 1). Thich Tue Sy and Thich Thanh Huyen were "sentenced" to administrative detention under the now-familiar security grounds of "abusing democracy to cause harm to the State."

4. (SBU) Post notes that when Thich Quang Do's administrative detention order was lifted this past June, the order was signed by the district People's Committee. We are unsure if there is any significance to the fact that Thich Tue Sy's detention order was signed by the HCMC People's Committee, though even Thich Tue Sy -- who has much longer experience with this sort of situation than Post does -- cannot understand how HCMC can accuse him of crimes he allegedly committed that would have taken place outside its local jurisdiction.

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